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blm - alaska

frontiers

managing public lands for multiple use

Issue 25 September 1990

Girl Scouts collect arctic trash for BLM

Rochelle Bredbenner, 11, reacts to an "icky" piece of trash near Finger Rocks on the Dalton Highway. ARCO Alaska Inc. provided hats, vests and litter bags and gave the scouts a tour of their Prudhoe Bay facility. The girls covered 300 miles of the Dalton Highway.

u.s. department of the interior • bureau of land management

BLM Fire fighters face fierce summer in Alaska

This summer started off looking like a slow fire season in Alaska, but by the first of July lightning began to strike—and not just once or twice, but many times all across Alaska. On the Fourth of July Mother Nature provided the fireworks, sending almost 4,000 lightning strikes.

By the end of July approximately 2,600 fire fighters were battling blazes burning on almost 2.2 million acres.

By the end of the first week in August a total of 721 fires had burned 2.4 million acres, an area of 3,806 square miles. (That's bigger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined.) And 106 fires were still burning.

These fires ranged from a tenth of an acre to 300,000 acres in size.

All 350 BLM Alaska Fire Service employees and many others from across the nation have been working at fever pitch since mid July to control the blazes that threatened valuable resources, structures or lives.

Although fire roared right up to the town of Tok on July 5th, fire fighters managed to avert damage to the town and the Coast Guard Loran station there.

"It has been a long season and a late season," said BLM Fire Information Officer Sue Mitchell. "We have now exceeded the number of acres burned in 1988, which was the worst fire year in ten years." By August a few scattered showers had fallen, but overall, the normal fall rains had not materialized.

Considering the immensity of the fires, few buildings burned; two abandoned buildings on the Alaska Highway, one greenhouse in Tok, and several scattered cabins were the only ones.

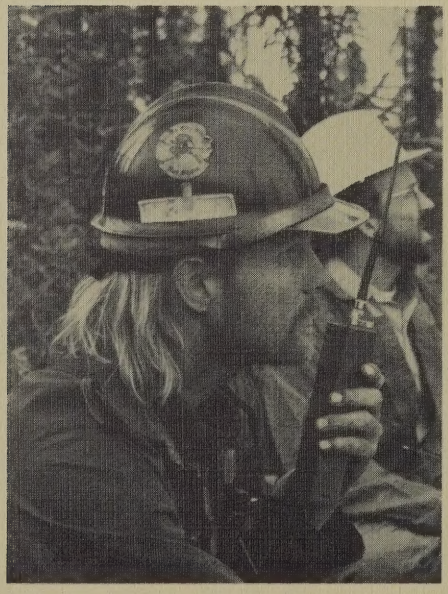
"On BLM-managed fires," said BLM Alaska Fire Service Manager Gene Schloemer, "three towns, 28 cabins and more than 100 Native allotments were protected this summer."

However, some valuable white spruce timber belonging to the Tetlin Village Corporation burned, as well as several Native allotments. Native allotments are small parcels of land patented to Native Alaskans.

As far as harm to the environment is concerned, says Sue Mitchell, most individual animals escape fires simply by leaving the area. A few are trapped and die.

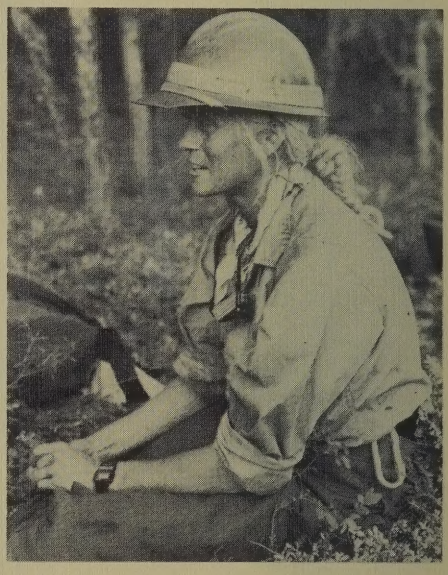
But biologists believe that fires can benefit the habitat, and thus the animal populations, in the long run. Fires, they say, are part of the natural ecology of Alaska.

—Jane Mangus



Left: Skip Theisen, Incident Commander on the Minchumina fire, discusses fire conditions with a helicopter overhead. Theisen was being interviewed by reporter Tom Kizzia, right, at the time.

Skip Theisen, Superintendent of the Chena Hot Shots 20-person crew, grubs for hot spots along the fire line.



Woman on Midnight Sun Hot Shots crew out of Fairbanks takes a break on the Beaver fire. This fire started in June, was still burning in August.

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Girl Scouts collect Dalton Highway trash

As a public service project, 22 Girl Scouts from towns all over interior Alaska spent a week in June traveling the Dalton Highway and picking up litter. It was the longest and farthest-north litter pick-up they'd ever staged.

The Dalton Highway (which runs from the town of Livengood north to Prudhoe Bay) is the farthest north highway in the Western Hemisphere. The BLM manages a 300-mile stretch along the highway between the Yukon River and the oil fields of Prudhoe Bay.

Along their way up the highway, the scouts learned plant, animal and rock identification; learned about careers in BLM; and earned points toward various outdoor badges. They separated aluminum cans for recycling and collected everything from old tire scraps and headlights to fast food packaging. At one stop the girls picked up over 100 bags of trash.

When the Alaska Department of Transportation, which manages the road itself, was unable to keep the road clean due to budget constraints, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner Cal Wescott asked the Farthest North Council of the Girl Scouts to help.

Each night of the trip, the girls were responsible for camp chores under the supervision of 12 parents and scout leaders. One group cooked, another did dishes, another was responsible for the evening's entertainment.

After long days walking the road and chores in the evening, the scouts slept well in their tents. Said one scout, "It's fun but it's hard work."

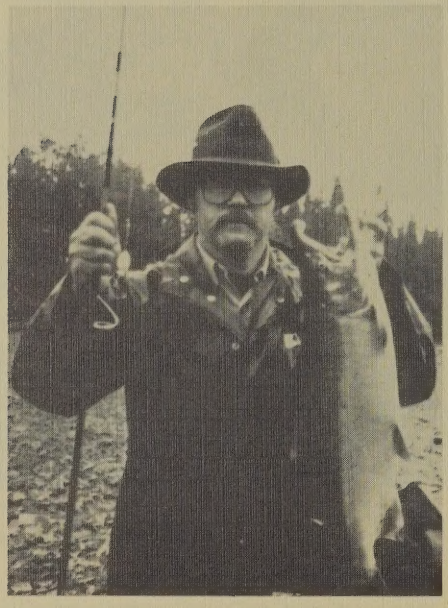
—Sue Mitchell

Above: Christa James, 11, Rochelle Bredbenner, 11, Melissa Hall, 10, and Jenny Kardell, 12, pick up trash beside a full trash can at the Finger Rocks pullout.

Left: Christa James, 11, retrieves a can as her mother, Linda James, helps her. Sadie MacScolman, 11, looks on. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline is in the background.

Way, way out: fishing on the wild Unalakleet

If you're looking for remote and wild, take a look at this place



Fisherman Dave Kelley shows off a small king salmon.

Dick Vernimen hadn't expected it. Hooking a fish on practically every cast?

Vernimen and two other BLM employees were on the Unalakleet River that year to build an administrative field camp when he learned the unexpected. The river was loaded with fish.

After a long day of posthole digging, they went upriver to do some fishing, but didn't expect much success.

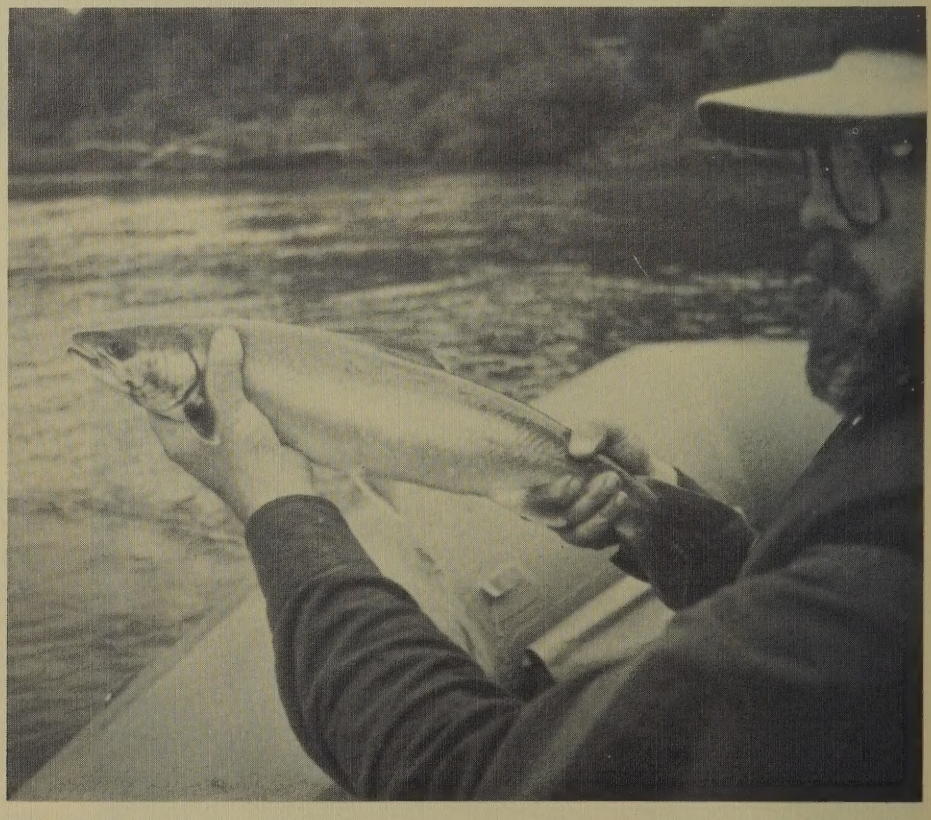
One of the others on the trip, Craig Altop, explains, "The coho run had been going on for quite a while and the main part of the run had gone. But we got lucky."

"We hit a hole and started catching all kinds of fish," says Vernimen. "Every cast, we got something. It got to the point where we flattened the barbs on our hooks so we wouldn't injure the fish." That night they brought salmon, char and grayling back to their campsite. This became an evening ritual.

A year later, in May of 1987, Vernimen and another group of coworkers returned to the river to finish building the site. Their after-hours fishing couldn't compare with that of the year before. The river was running high and muddy. The salmon run hadn't started, and after a week of trying, they only caught a few grayling.

Although the Unalakleet River offers spectacular fishing, it's like many other Alaskan rivers where timing, water, and weather conditions can make or break even the most talented angler.

Early summer anglers may



Dave Kelley with an arctic char.

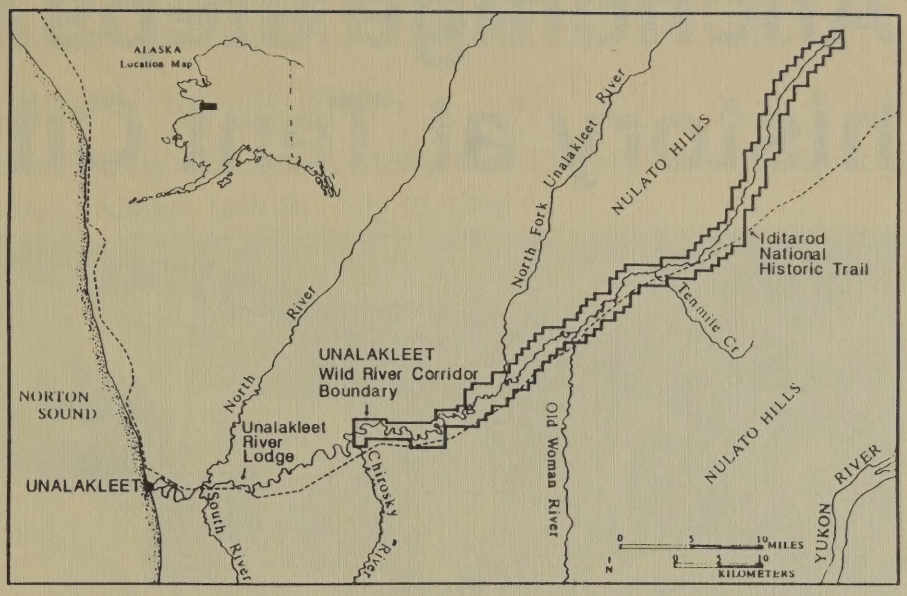
encounter a swollen Unalakleet—and few fish. But by June the river has settled and the Chinooks (or kings, as they're called in Alaska) are running. In July there's a small sockeye (red salmon) run, while August and September are the prime months for coho (silvers).

The Unalakleet River supports estimated salmon runs of more than 100,000 fish.

Altop adds, "Dolly Varden fishing is almost unequalled. Grayling fishing is excellent in the summer, and when the silvers are running it's just amazing—they just pack the river."

Fishing is considered excellent throughout the river, but is more varied above the North Fork. Local residents from the village of Unalakleet are the primary users of the river. They mostly subsistence fish the river's lower reaches.

The few sports fishermen are usually clients of the Unalakleet River Lodge, a sports lodge and the only commercial establishment on the river. These anglers do most of their fishing in the confluences of the North and Chiroskey Rivers for Chinook and coho salmon, although they also take some char and arctic grayling.



Commercial fishing isn't done in the river, but does occur offshore in Norton Sound near the mouth of the river.

The crystal clear waters of the generally slow-moving Unalakleet make it easy to observe and catch fish. Those traveling the river will encounter few, if any, people. In the distance are the Nulato Hills, small round-top mountains which occasionally peek through dense stands of white spruce, birch and balsam that line the river. Unexcelled fishing awaits the avid angler at this wild and remote river.

—Danielle Allen

More about the Unalakleet River

Most of the Unalakleet River corridor is administered by the Bureau of Land Management as a national wild river, under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Below Chiroskey River the land is either private or Native-selected (selected by a Native corporation as part of its potential entitlement under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act).

To get to the river you can take a commercial airline flight to the village of Unalakleet, but before you go, make arrangements for other transportation, lodging and services.

This is wild country. There are no roads in the area. Do not travel alone.

Access is primarily by boat as far upstream as the confluence of the Old Woman River. But to get to the headwaters, it is recommended that a helicopter be chartered. Once in the upper reaches of the river, your party can be deposited on a gravel bar to float and fish down the river. The river is ideal for canoeing and rafting, especially in the upper limits, but up-river access is difficult.

Camping is excellent in the upper part of the river where gravel bars at practically every bend provide clean campsites free of insects and vegetation.

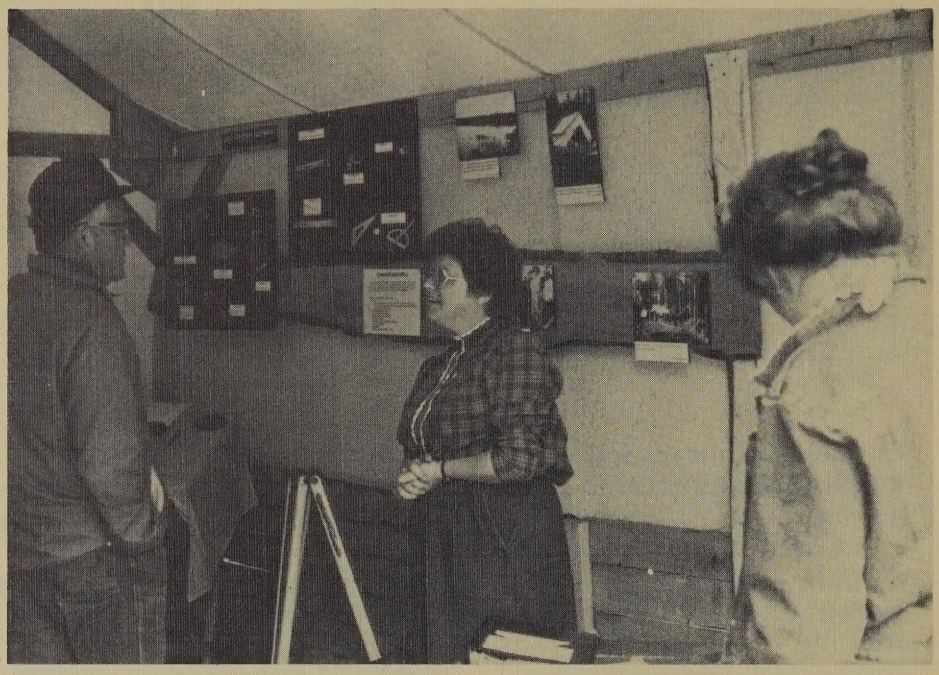
Bird watchers and photographers will have ample opportunity to observe ducks, geese, shorebirds and raptors.

Hunting is best upstream, and big game such as moose, caribou and bear is more readily taken from the surrounding hills, where landing sites can be found.

For more recreation information about the Unalakleet River, call Dean Littlepage at (907) 267-1225 or write him c/o the BLM Anchorage District Office, 6881 Abbott Loop Rd., Anchorage, AK 99507.

—Danielle Allen

Anchorage steps back into history at Tent City Festival



Stephanie Clusiau, center, was one of 42 BLM employees who staffed the exhibit. About 30,000 people visited the festival.

In 1915 the General Land Office, which later became part of the BLM, came to what is now Anchorage to lay out a townsite and auction off house lots to thousands of people living in tents on the banks of Ship Creek. The people had swarmed north to get jobs on the construction of the Alaska Railroad.

The Bureau of Land Management figured prominently in the development of the city of Anchorage. On July 10, 1915, the auction conducted by the General Land Office sparked the transformation of a tent "city" to the Anchorage of today.

This summer the Tent City Festival, sponsored by the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce for eleven days in June and July, celebrated Anchorage's birth in 1915.

BLM had one of many historical exhibits housed in tents at the festival. In its tent, BLM presented an exhibit explaining the role of the General Land Office. Historic photos and a 1915 plat showing lots available for auction in the townsite were a part of the exhibit. A multi-dimensional display of historic surveying tools was also shown.

The Tent City Festival was a scaled-down version of the original settlement. Two newspapers, a bank, post office and saloon with dance hall girls helped lend an air of authenticity.

People wanting to know more about the auction and layout of Anchorage went to BLM's General Land Office tent; visitors needing information went to the city hall tent; those wanting to pan for gold went to the Bureau of Mines' tent.

Wood chips lined the narrow streets, and many people staffing the tents dressed in vintage clothing.

The festival ended July 10 with a re-enactment of the original auction. Speakers there included U.S. Senator Ted Stevens, Anchorage Mayor Tom Fink and BLM Anchorage District Manager Dick Vernimen.

A total of 42 BLM employees worked in the General Land Office tent.

Dick Vernimen commented, "Not only did we get to inform the public about BLM's historic role, but many of our staffers got an education about early Anchorage."

—Danielle Allen/ Jane Mangus

Editor's Note: The insert on the next four pages is a mini-newspaper that BLM distributed at the Tent City Festival. Modeled on the 1915 *Cook Inlet Pioneer and Knik News*, the newspaper explains the General Land Office's role in creating the city of Anchorage.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE

BULLETIN AND NEWS

VOL. 1 Anchorage, Alaska , June 30 - July 10, 1990 NO. 1

Land Office and AEC Lay Out Townsite

When Andrew Christensen arrived in Ship Creek in May 1915, he saw thousands of tents scattered north of Ship Creek underneath a plateau now called Government Hill. He also saw a frontier town in need of direction and permanency.

Christensen, the Chief of the Alaska Field Division of the General Land Office (GLO) had left Juneau to come to Ship Creek to lay out the townsite and sell lots.

He quickly began to prepare the townsite for development with the help of Alaska Engineering Commissioner Frederick Mears.

The Alaska Engineering Commission (AEC) had established its presence at Ship Creek in 1914 in preparation for building a railroad to the Matanuska coal fields.

Speculation that Ship Creek would be the starting point for the railroad caused the area's population to swell. In March a tent city began to form and by June, 2,000 people lived in the temporary settlement.

Christensen and Mears had their work cut out for them. Their plan was simple. They proposed a series of square blocks separated by a grid system of streets superimposed on the Ship Creek plateau.

J. Frank Warner, Examiner of Surveys for Alaska and his assistant, Victor H. Wilhelm, led the townsite survey. Two hundred forty acres were cleared and 121 blocks, each 300 feet square, were laid out. Alleys bisected the blocks which were subdivided into 12 lots, each 50 feet x 140 feet. Initially, 1,400 lots were created. Once lots were sold and permanent buildings erected, the AEC could then proceed with building the railroad, which would extend from Seward north to Ship Creek, then to Nenana.

The AEC and General Land Office laid the townsite out in two months. Clearing and platting the land was completed in six months. Blocks were reserved for schools, federal and municipal buildings, parks and a cemetery. Two districts were established outside the townsite, one for prostitutes and the other for laborers who did not buy real estate.

The highest bid was $1150 for lot 7, block 26 made by G.M. Campbell.

Superintendent of Sales Christensen won praises for the fair, square manner in which he conducted the sale of lots in the townsite. The sale of lots in the Anchorage townsite broke all former records in sale of lots in government townsites.

Auction Was Success

The Alaska Railroad townsite regulations issued by President Woodrow Wilson set the conditions for the auction and land use. Details of the auction were the last thing worked out. Most tent city residents favored a drawing but the Land Office decided lots sold to the highest bidder would encourage investment as opposed to speculation.

Superintendent of the Sale Andrew Christensen was given broad powers of appraisal and the right to reject any bid. The minimum purchase price was $25 a lot although appraisals ranged from $25 to $400. Business lots on Fourth Avenue were appraised at the highest prices. A successful bidder could pay in full or make installment payments for five years. Patents were to be issued five years after the auction. Uses not permitted on the lots included manufacturing, selling or disposing of intoxicating liquors, gambling and prostitution.

continued on back page

U.S.S. 4

Filed ... M
... Recorder

U.S.S. 409

PLAT OF
ANCHORAGE TOW

T 13 N. R 3 W., Seward Meridia

ALASKA

Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet

Survey commenced May 24, Completed June 2

Area Subdivided 347.15 Acres.

LEGEND

Block corners are spruce posts 3 X 3 X 30 inches; lot corners are 1½ X 1½ X 30 inches. Iron post reference monuments 1 inch diameter 3 feet long sunk 1 foot beneath surface of ground, are located at intersection of center lines of streets and indicated thus..... ⊡

Anchorage

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GENERAL LAND OFFICE

Washington, D.C. September 10, 1915

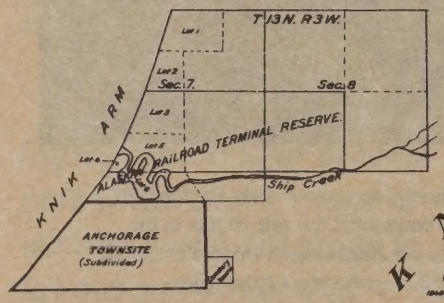
I hereby certify that this plat of ANCHORAGE TOWNSITE in T 13 N. R 3 W. Seward Meridian, Alaska, as surveyed under instructions dated May 15, 1915 by J. Frank Warner and K. H. Wilhelm, U.S. Surveyors, in accordance with the provisions of the act of March 12, 1914 (38 Stats. 305) is strictly conformable to the field notes of the survey thereof on file in this office which have been examined and approved.

Commissioner

Approved October 5, 1915.

Wm. C. Edes.

Chairman Alaska Engineering Commission



M.C. Cor. No. 4 Iron post

M.C. Cor. No. 3 Iron post

WHARF 10 RESERVE

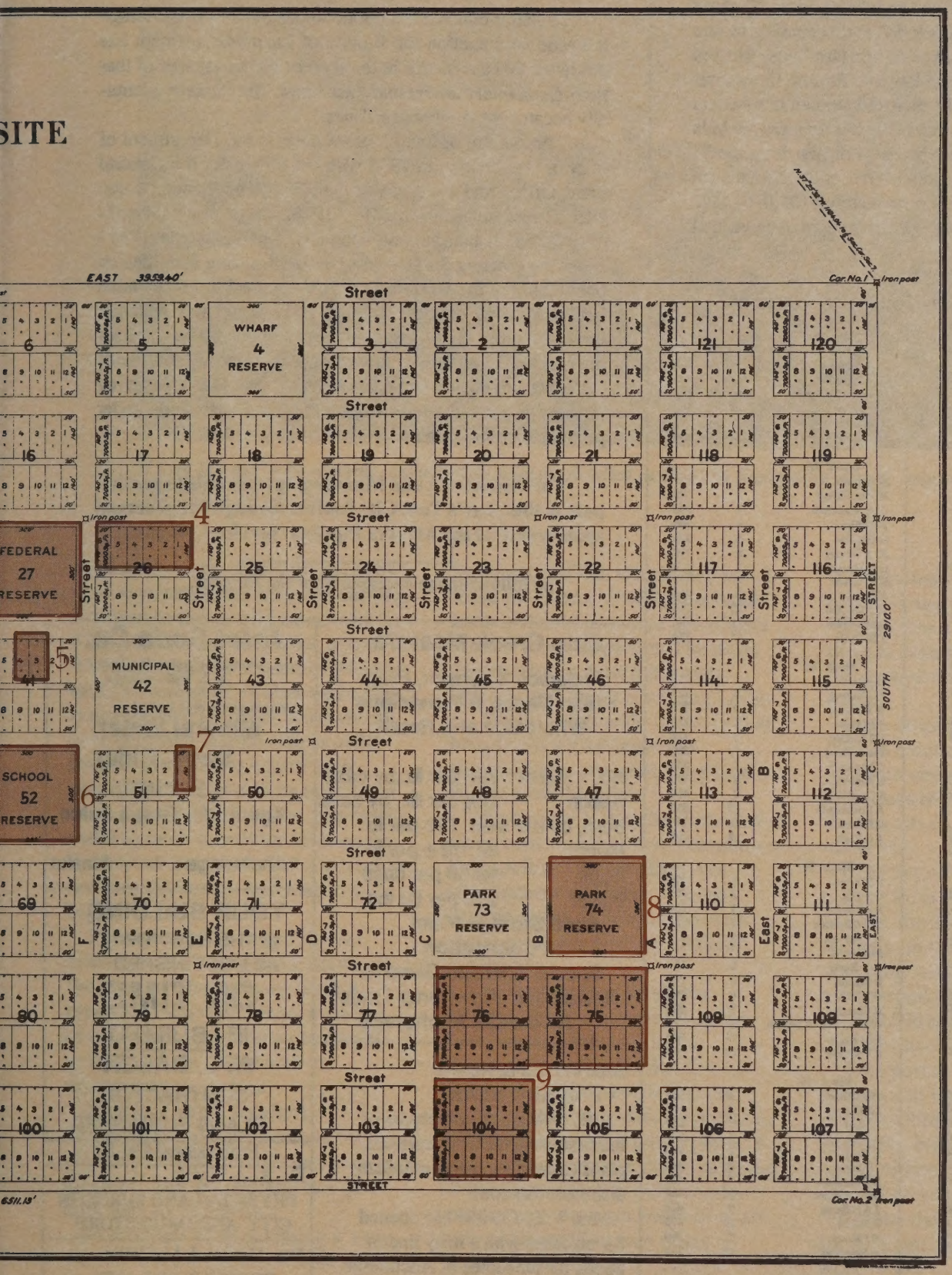
PARK 35 RESERVE 84774 Sq. Ft.

First
Second
Third
Fourth
Fifth
Sixth
Seventh
Eighth
NINTH

A Street
B Street
C Street
D Street
E Street
F Street
G Street
H Street
I Street
K Street
L Street
M Street
N Street
O Street
P Street
R Street

KNIK ARM

WEST



Anchorage

The Old & New

Some of today's choicest real estate was purchased at the 1915 auction.

1 The Oscar Anderson House

Believed to be the first residence completed following the townsite auction in 1915. Original location was Block 32, lot 6, moved to present location at 1978.

2 Captain Cook Hotel

A year after the 1964 earthquake, the Captain Cook Hotel opened.

3 Old Federal Building

Original tenants residing in this 50-year old historic structure included the Post Office and U.S. Department of Interior.

4 Anchorage Hilton Hotel

This tract has been a hotel site since 1916 when C. B. Wark erected the Anchorage Hotel, in 1917 it was purchased by the Frank Reed Family. It became the Anchorage Westward in 1940 and more recently the Hilton.

5 Fourth Avenue Theater

This grand theater with lavish Alaskan murals opened in 1947.

6 Alaska Center for the Performing Arts

The land under this two-year-old $65 million structure was originally a school reserve. The Anchorage High School was once here.

7 Kimball's Store

One of Anchorage's earliest commercial establishments, Kimball's, constructed in 1915, sold general merchandise. It is the only 1915 structure still on original site.

8 Anchorage Museum of History and Art

Opened in 1968, the museum occupies a block which was a park reserve.

9 Federal Building - U.S. Courthouse

Completed in 1980, this three block office complex is home to many area federal agencies.

continued from front page - Auction Success

Approximately 1,000 to 3,000 people assembled around a platform at the foot of C Street on July 10, 1915. The first lot went for $825 (lot 1, Block 44) and according to one reporter "lots went as hot cakes do in a farmhouse kitchen on a frosty morning." Several lots sold for four times their appraised price. Most of the men and women in sweaters and overalls didn't look to have 50¢ but they put up bids amounting to $48,000 in two hours. For two days, the 50 foot x 140 foot lots sold - one every 90 seconds. Christensen recorded 655 lots sold for approximately $150,000 at the first auction. Auctions were later held in August and November.

A partial listing of the record of sales of 1915 auction.

Block 2		
Purchaser	Lot	Price
Rose Johnson	1	$75
J L Kimball	3	75
"	4	85
"	5	85
D Wilkinson	6	275
Block 3		
R Small	1	385
Jennie Crawford	2	205
A W Mylorie	3	185
"	4	190
"	5	205
"	6	355
J A Laubner	7	230
C P Pederson	8	845
Farrington&Jenks	9	125
W E Lee	10	110
W S Horning	11	115
J L Kimball	12	195
Block 4		
A Fowler	7	200
"	8	160
E Wehneke	9	155
F Johanissen	10	125
C J Griffith	11	135
A Fowler	12	250
Block 5		
R E McDonald	5	180
W L Balch	6	200
Block 6		
G M Campbell	1	250
"	2	200
Block 22		
Mrs J H Bell	1	115
O Anderson	2	85
W M Duncan	3	95
M W Biedrick	4	85
"	5	85
"	6	100
E F Williams	7	245
A Lee	8	165
S Nyberg	9	130
E Rawson	10	130
N Enander	11	120
A Bustenson	12	180
Block 23		
F Willis	1	145
G Miteff	2	140
P Krivokapich	3	180
J Miller	4	140
"	5	165
"	6	280
A J Landstrom	7	700
G Gelliff	8	475
A Dunlap	9	400
J W Gable	10	375
A Moen	11	380
A J Walters	12	450
Block 24		
O W Evans	1	280
R Fairbanks	7	950
M J Conroy	8	650
G E Burleigh	9	800
J E McDonald	10	775
J Collins	11	750
E C Matton	12	950

Block 25		
Brown & Hawkins	7	1075
G M Campbell	8	675
Mike Reilly	9	600
S A Polley	10	650
S Saunders	11	775
C B Dodge	12	900
Block 26		
H J Emard	1	425
Martha Richter	2	300
Alice Mansfield	3	300
T Phillips	4	260
G Osborne	5	300
M J Conroy	6	710
G M Campbell	7	1150
R T Larson	8	765
J Turner	9	740
W J McLeod	10	740
Marie Miller	11	725
F M Boyle	12	950
Block 28		
G deLion	1	510
M J Conroy	2	225
W Petersen	3	210
A M Laska	4	215
J N McCain	5	225
Marrison	6	280
C McGown	7	550
R Summy	8	430
S Overland	9	450
A Kovacevich	10	510
C C Bush	11	550
A S Kock	12	700
Block 29		
F Parsons	1	395
G S Lee	2	205
E J Warner	3	180
C R Crawford	4	180
K J McLean	5	175
McLean & Boyle	6	400
R Summy	7	765
W J McLeod	8	655
K Kimada	9	680
NWPilger & BCNicols	10	670
F M Boyle	11	680
E J Warner	12	800
Block 30		
Fred Parsons	1	305
J L Olsson	2	165
T King	3	165
C Petersen	4	160
C Bush	5	200
J Hirsch	6	410
E B Summy	7	620
Martha White	8	480
J A Hillman	9	465
F Ackles	10	475
P J Keely	11	580
A Hamilton	12	725
Block 31		
L M Martin	1	405
"	2	240
J Bell	3	230
J Collins	4	210
J Hylin	5	200
J T Young	6	410
R I Simonson	7	280

GLO Became the BLM

To better educate the public about the 1915 Anchorage townsite land auction the Bureau of Land Management has produced this newsletter in the style of the newspaper of that time, *Cook Inlet Pioneer and Knik News*. The *Pioneer* eventually became the *Anchorage Times*.

The Bureau of Land Management in the Department of Interior was created in 1946 with the merger of the General Land Office and the Grazing Service. The General Land Office, in existence from 1812 - 1946, was primarily responsible for public land surveys and sales. Operating from 1934 - 1946, the Grazing Service administered grazing activities on public land in the western U.S. Its responsibilities included issuing licenses, conducting range surveys and making range improvements. BLM assumed these responsibilities. Major programs of BLM in Alaska are the conveyance of public lands to the State of Alaska and Alaska Natives, the cadastral survey of those lands and administering the remaining lands under principles of multiple use.

The Bureau of Land Management was able to participate in this year's Tent City festival through the generous sponsorship of the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.

The following are excerpts from the *Pioneer*.

Ship Creek Meat Co.

Anderson & Jensen, Prop.
Fresh Meats & Provisions
Wholesale and Retail

No. 1 Hams	20¢ per lb., by case
Bacon	25¢ per lb., by case
Beef, by the side	19¢ per lb.
Mutton	22 1/2 ¢ per lb.
Eggs	$9.50 per case
Butter	$19 per 60 lbs.

Cold Storage Plant in Connection
Special Attention Given to Restaurant, Mine Camp Trade
Riverside, Anchorage

Inlet Soda Co.
Diedrick & Taylor, Propietors
W. A. Taylor, Manager
Manufacturers of all kinds of
Mineral Water
Soda, Cider
Syrups
Agents for Grape Juice
Anchorage Alaska

YOUR BUILDING
IN THE NEW TOWN
WILL BE FINISHED
ON TIME
IF I BUILD IT
W. L. BALCH
CONTRACTOR
PLANS FURNISHED

BREVITIES & NEWS
FAR AND NEAR

L.D. Nyberg, the purchaser of the first lot in the new townsite, plans to erect a general merchandise store thereon.

Mrs. T. D. Corlew has opened for business with a nifty line of goods for the ladies of Anchorage.

Bob Dupree, crazed with drink shot Clara Collins, a woman of the underworld.

Professional Cards

Dr. K. A. Kyvig
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON
CITY AND DRUG STORE

Drs. Hawes & McCallie
BRIDGE WORK AND
PORCELAIN SPECIALISTS
Satisfaction Guaranteed in All
Up-to Date Dentistry

Satellite tracking makes flying safer

If they test out to be effective, transmitters may be installed in all BLM firefighting planes, even cargo planes like this sturdy old DC-3.

Keeping track of aircraft in flight is an expensive and time-consuming function in fire management and in BLM as a whole. In Alaska, a system of radio repeaters is used to provide radio coverage of an area more than twice the size of Texas. Aircraft call in to central dispatch offices at 30-minute intervals to report their positions. If a plane does not report in on time, the dispatcher gets on the radio to see if any other stations on the net can contact it. If the aircraft is not located, search and rescue is begun.

This system has its problems, however. A helicopter or plane on the ground often cannot reach a repeater. Pilots can forget to call in, or equipment problems can disable a radio. All these can lead to unnecessary searches.

In case of a real accident, dispatchers must extrapolate the plane's position from its last known location. And an airplane can go a long way in 30 minutes.

So this year BLM is testing a new satellite tracking system called the Radio Determination Satellite System, or RDSS, which may solve these problems. RDSS units have been installed in two of the Alaska Fire Service's airplanes. The units automatically determine their latitude and longitude using Loran C. This is a statewide network that broadcasts signal beams to electronically pinpoint the plane's location for the pilot.

What's new is that the units in the plane now transmit this information to a satellite. The satellite is in geosynchronous orbit—it goes around at the same rate the earth revolves, so it's always "parked" overhead.

The satellite then sends the information to a computer on the East Coast. Back in Alaska, dispatchers at the Alaska Fire Service in Fairbanks dial up the computer for immediate reports on the exact location of the airplane. A large-screen monitor displays a map of the United States and Canada, and the operator can zoom in to an area of about 15 square miles, showing the aircraft's location within about 90 feet!

The transmitters can be set to report at any interval. The Alaska Fire Service planes are located every three minutes. In addition, the pilot can type short messages and send them.

In an emergency the pilot just pushes a button and the transmitter sends an emergency message. If the pilot does that, the dot indicating the aircraft on the computer screen turns red.

BLM State Fire Management Officer Russ Hanson says, "As far as I know, the BLM is kind of leading the way on this. A lot of people are watching what we're doing."

Eventually BLM hopes to install the $10,000 transmitters in all its contract aircraft.

This year is a test to see if the system will work well in the northern latitudes of Alaska and is worth the high cost of transmitters and telephone line charges.

But if an aircraft crashes, minutes can make the difference between survival and death. And that's worth a lot.

—Sue Mitchell

Two new district managers arrive

New managers have taken the helm at two northern BLM districts.

Helen Hankins is the new manager of the Kobuk District, and Dee Ritchie is the new manager of the Arctic District.

A 20-year BLM employee, Hankins is returning to Alaska after a two-year stint in Washington, D.C. She says, "I'm looking forward to being back in the far north, and I'm especially excited about living in Fairbanks. I'm ready for the challenges of this new job."

Challenges await her in this vast roadless and treeless BLM district on the Seward Peninsula, where she is responsible for 16.5 million acres of public lands scattered from Fairbanks west to the Seward Peninsula and north to Kotzebue. The district has field stations at Kotzebue and Nome, and administers the only reindeer grazing program in the United States.

Hankins holds a bachelor of science degree in geology. In previous assignments in Alaska, she worked in resource areas, districts and at the state office level, moving from field geologist to management positions.

"I've already started addressing the resource issues and concerns in the Kobuk District," Hankins says. "There are opportunities here to accomplish important things."

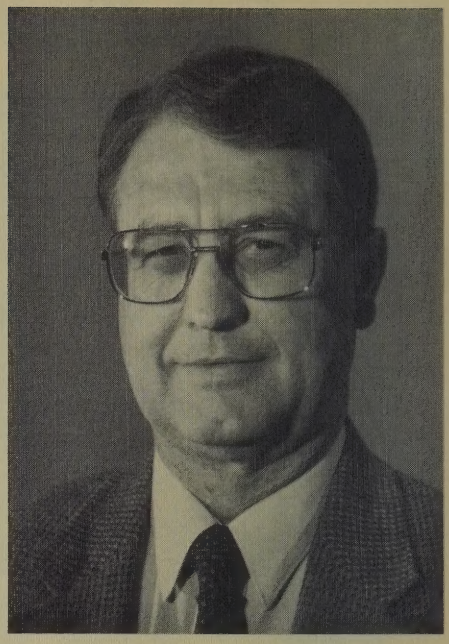
• • •

For Dee Ritchie, Alaska will be a new experience. He considers this assignment a childhood dream come true.

He now assumes management responsibility for 35 million acres, BLM-Alaska's farthest north public lands. They include the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, which is the largest single block of public land in America; the Central Arctic Management Area, the Venetie Block; and the Utility Corridor, which contains the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

"I hope to make a positive contribution to the management and use of the important public land resources in Alaska," Ritchie says.

Ritchie has worked for both the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service in a variety of resource and administrative positions in western states. In Washington, D.C., he was a Legislative Fellow in the U.S. Senate, serving on Nevada Senator Harry Reid's staff; he was also on the Appropriations Committee for the BLM.



Dee Ritchie, Arctic district manager

Ritchie holds a bachelor's degree in forestry, range and wildlife management; and a master's degree in botany, range management and plant pathology.

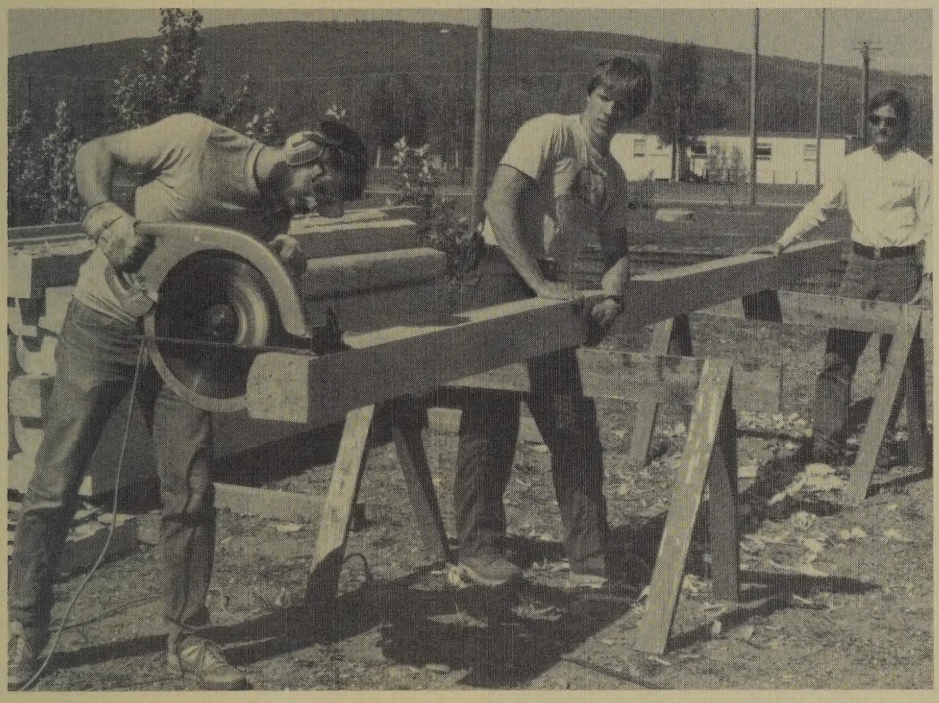
Hankins replaces Roger Bolstad, now manager of the Steese/White Mountains District. Ritchie replaces M. Thomas Dean, now fire coordinator for the Alaska Interagency Fire Center on Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson

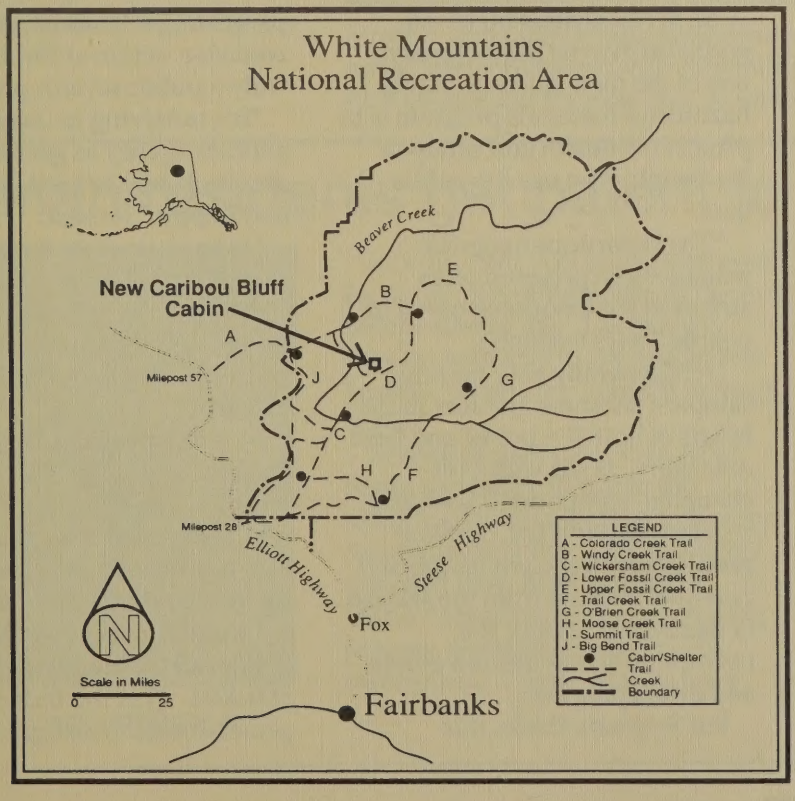
Helen Hankins, Kobuk district manager

in White Mountains

BLM builds another new recreation cabin



Randy Goodwin and two BLM smoke jumpers cut and peel logs for the new Caribou Bluffs cabin. Materials were pre-cut and finished early this summer then airlifted to the cabin site.



This summer the Bureau of Land Management built the seventh in the series of cabins it has been putting up in the White Mountains National Recreation Area near Fairbanks. The new Caribou Bluff cabin will provide overnight accommodations for cross country skiers and snowmachiners traveling between the Borealis-LeFevre and Windy Gap cabins. The distance between the cabins has now been reduced from 23 miles to about twelve.

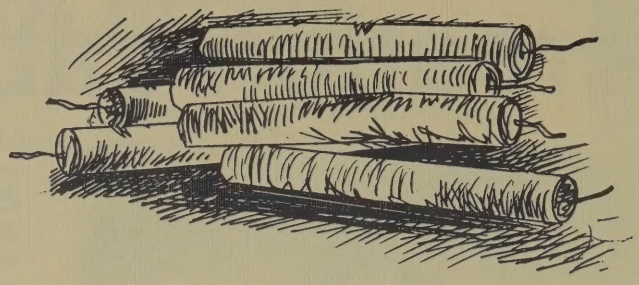
A new trail, the Gap Trail, is scheduled to be built after the snow falls. It will connect the new cabin with Lower Fossil Creek Trail and Colorado Creek Trail, and will give people several choices for three- to four-day loop trips in the area.

The new cabin and the trail bring recreational improvements planned by BLM for the western section of the White Mountains area nearly to completion. Only one more cabin remains on the drawing board for this area.

The Caribou Bluff cabin is 10-by-12, made of logs, and has room for six people to sleep. Bunk beds (for two on the bottom and one on top) were built in, along with a fold-down table and benches. An outhouse is nearby. A wood heating stove and a woodshed will be installed this winter.

This cabin, as well as other BLM public recreation cabins, can be rented for $15 a night. Reservations may be made by calling (907) 474-2250, or writing BLM-Land Information Office, 1150 University Ave., Fairbanks, AK 99709-3844.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson



BLM destroys old dynamite

In June the Bureau of Land Management, with the help of the U.S. Army's Explosive Ordinance Detachment (EOD), disposed of the remains of some 20-year-old dynamite that had been discovered within the Birch Creek National Wild and Scenic River corridor. It was discovered by BLM employees late last summer in an area not visible from the river.

The dynamite had been abandoned near an old campsite not far from the river at the confluence of Great Unknown Creek and Birch Creek, about 100 miles northeast of Fairbanks.

The site is used occasionally by trappers, river users and miners.

BLM coordinated the disposal of the dynamite by U.S. Army EOD personnel from Fort Richardson in Anchorage.

The cardboard tubes, which still held a small amount of dynamite, were collected and burned on a gravel bar in the river.

"It wasn't very spectacular," said Jon Kostohrys, the BLM Steese/White Mountains District hydrologist who coordinated the project. "There was very little powder, and it had lost its bang over the years. Most of it had leached into the ground and dissipated."

After checking the site carefully, the EOD specialists could find no residual dynamite in the soil.

The U.S. Army at Fort Wainwright provided helicopter transportation to the site after increased wildfire activity preempted the BLM-contracted helicopter.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson

Here's what to do if you find something

BLM Hazardous Materials specialist Wayne Svejnoha says one of the main goals of BLM's hazardous materials program is to protect the health and safety of the people who use the public land.

"The hazardous materials management program often strikes to the emotional nerve of people," says Svejnoha.

"It is generally easy to create rampant paranoia and fear in the hearts of both the public and land managers. What with ever-changing, complicated laws and regulations; civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance; and potential impacts from the release of hazardous wastes, the perception is that this is a gloom and doom program."

But Svejnoha thinks this program, as demonstrated in the response action at Birch Creek, is truly a public service program.

"It's satisfying to cooperate with another agency to get something accomplished to keep people safe and happy," he said.

He has some tips for people using public lands:

- When you're in the field and see something suspicious, make note of what you see and the exact location.
- For your own safety do not approach or touch and handle any object.
- Observe the site carefully at a safe distance. It's best to stand upwind and uphill of the site.

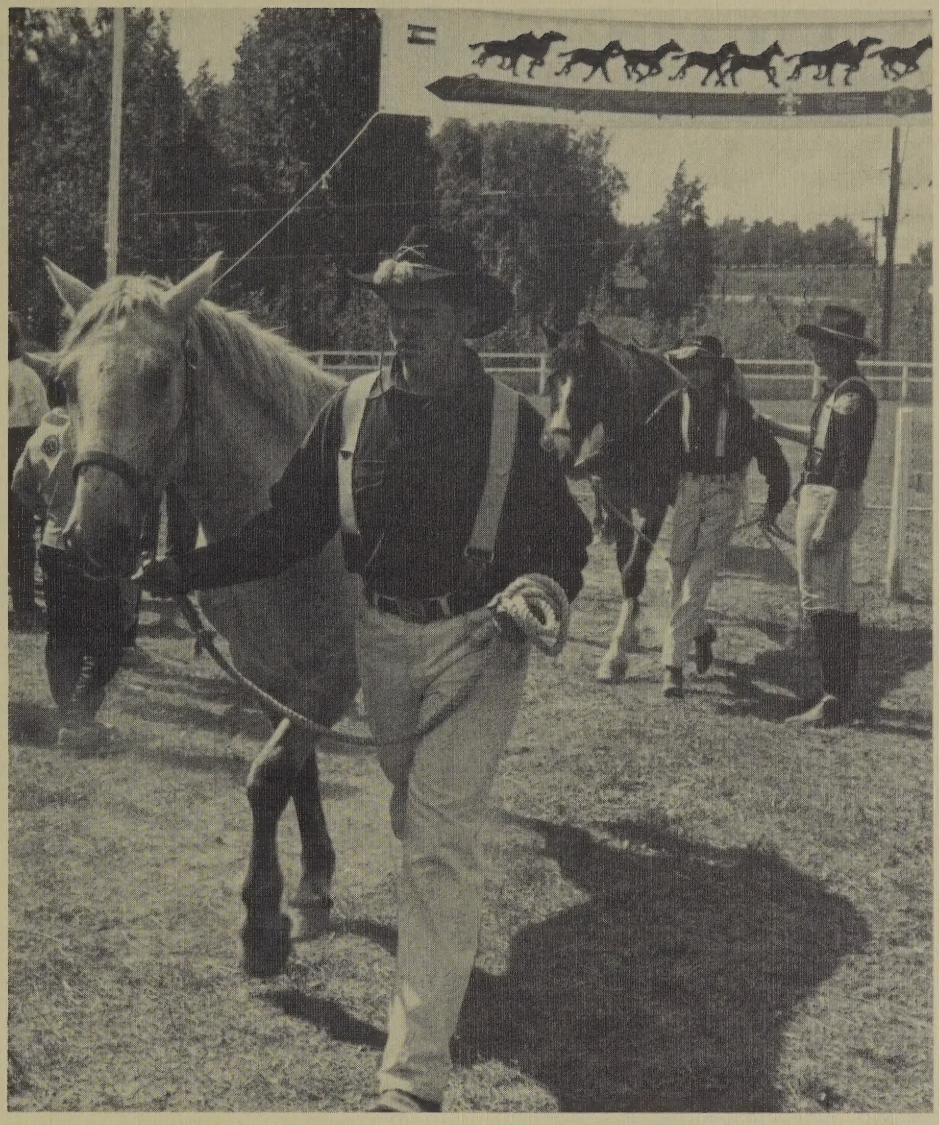
"We must all combat the Sherlock Holmes syndrome," he chuckles. "Let the trained professionals investigate the site."

Boy Scouts get wild horses

The enrollment of Adolph, Alvarez, Happy and Scooter has swelled the equine ranks of the Fairbanks-based 124th Cavalry Explorer Post to 10. The horses from BLM's national Adopt-A-Horse or Burro program will help provide the 21 members of the post the opportunity to learn to ride and care for their four-footed friends. The post is co-sponsored by the BLM Steese/White Mountains District and the Fairbanks Host Lions Club.

The horses completed the 4,000 mile journey to Fairbanks in June just in time for the Transfer of the Reins ceremony at Horse Haven Ranch, their new home. Bill Allen, publisher of the *Anchorage Times* newspaper and a dedicated horseman, provided transportation for the horses. These were wild horses captured on BLM administered public land in Colorado, Wyoming and Nevada. The horses were then gentled by inmates at the Fremont Correctional Facility in Canon City, Colorado, and finally transported to Fairbanks.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson



Explorer Scout Scott Martin leads Alvarez as other troopers lead three other wild horses from a Fairbanks show ring after a "Transfer of the Reins" ceremony in June. BLM co-sponsors the scout post, so waived the normal $125-per-horse adoption fee.

Wiseman residents get patent to their lots

Don Runberg presents certificate to Tishu Ulen

July 20, 1990, will be remembered by the people of Wiseman as the real independence day. On that day they became able to say finally and legally, "This is my home, it belongs to me."

Several buyers went to BLM's Fairbanks Office to watch the historic signing ceremony and carry their patents home. Don Runberg, who had been BLM Fairbanks District Manager during part of the process, signed the patents. He commented, "These patents have been a long time coming. I've watched our staff jump a lot of hurdles over the years to get this done." The buyers have been very patient.

The Wiseman lots average an acre in size. Purchase prices ranging from $450 to $7,000 were based on the fair market value of the land as determined by the BLM chief state appraiser. That price includes BLM's cost of surveying the land.

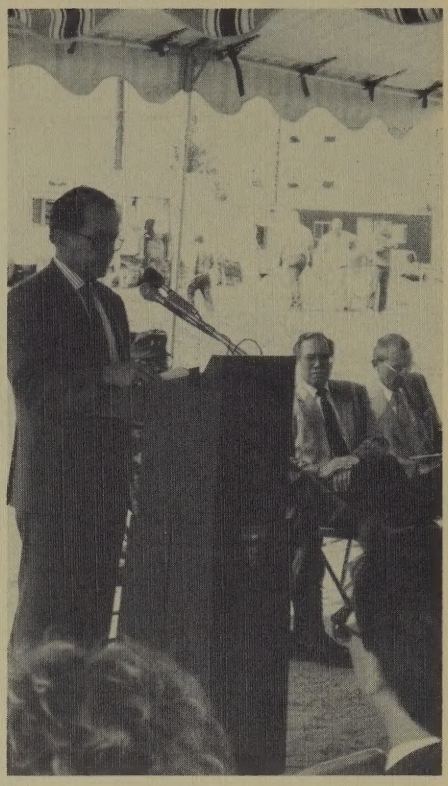
—Sharon Durgan Wilson

frontier flashes

Les Rosenkrance, BLM associate state director for Alaska, has been selected by national director Cy Jamison as the **new state director for Arizona.** In his new position Rosenkrance will direct management of 12.5 million acres of land, a $20 million budget, and 17 offices with a total of 454 employees.

Representatives of the **Eagle City Council, Eagle Historical Society and BLM's Steese/White Mountains District** have formed a group to assist in the future management strategy for historic Fort Egbert. BLM manages the fort, and the city and the historical society manage museums in the community of Eagle. Fort Egbert was established in 1899 to provide law and order and build roads, trails, and a telegraph line.

Following publication of Public Land Order 6787, **a 1.8-million-acre area known as the Iditarod/George** Planning Block, will now be managed under all provisions of the Federal Land Policy Management Act and of the mining laws.



U.S. Senator Ted Stevens speaks during dedication ceremony held in Fairbanks at the site where a new fire fighters' headquarters is being built. "For the first time," he said, "this group of fire fighters will work in a building designed for what they do."

This summer BLM's Glennallen district office landed right in the middle of a statewide controversy **over sports and subsistence hunting.** One hot spot in the controversy is the Nelchina caribou herd, which at this time of year occupies a vast area between the Denali and Glenn highways—state Game Manage-ment Unit 13. This is one of the few road-accessible hunting areas in the state.

This year as a result of various court decisions, the federal government has issued subsistence permits for individuals qualifying to hunt on federally-managed lands in various game units throughout the state. BLM representatives traveled to Cantwell, Paxson and Slana to issue these permits for moose and caribou subsistence hunting in game management unit 13. Permits were also issued from the Glennallen district office. "We handed out a total of about **520 caribou and 350 moose permits** as of mid-August, said district manager Gene Keith.

Throughout the hunting season, BLM law enforcement personnel are patrolling BLM-managed lands to assist hunters to comply with hunting and off-road vehicle regulations.

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